



# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

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Office of the Chairman

Honorable Kelley S. Coyner  
Administrator  
Research and Special Programs Administration  
Washington, D.C. 20590

OCT 15 1999

(NTSB MAILED  
10/18/99)

Dear Ms. Coyner:

The National Transportation Safety Board received your September 7, 1999, letter responding to Safety Recommendation P-99-12, which was issued to the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) on June 1, 1999, as a result of the Safety Board's Safety report *Evaluation of U.S. Department of Transportation Efforts in the 1990's to Address Operator Fatigue*. The Safety Board asked that RSPA establish within 2 years scientifically based hours-of-service regulations that set limits on hours of service, provide predictable work and rest schedules, and consider circadian rhythms and human sleep rest requirements.

The Safety Board is pleased to note that RSPA is reviewing previous pipeline accidents and research on fatigue and rotating work schedules and that RSPA is also coordinating with other Department of Transportation agencies and the pipeline industry to address fatigue issues associated with rotating pipeline controller shifts. The Board understands that RSPA has bolstered its examination of fatigue as a causative factor in previous pipeline accidents and has begun an analysis of recent incidents to answer this question and has modified its inspection process to focus on fatigue's influence and or the level of industry awareness of fatigue as a contributor to pipeline accidents.

After RSPA has assessed human fatigue in pipeline operations and has the results of the research and standards efforts now underway, RSPA will evaluate the need for further development and application of industry guidelines to reduce the likelihood of accidents attributable to controller fatigue and actively promote the development of additional guidelines.

Accordingly, pending a reply from RSPA on the status of these initiatives, Safety Recommendation P-99-12 is classified "Open—Acceptable Response." Thank you for acting promptly to address this issue.

Sincerely,

  
Jim Hall  
Chairman

cc: Mr. Robert Clarke, Safety and Health Team Leader  
Office of Transportation Policy Development

OCT 20 1999